

Good afternoon. My name is Bob Rees. I'm the executive director for the Association of Northwest Steelheaders in Milwaukie, Oregon, and a 20-year veteran professional fishing guide in the state of Oregon as well as Alaska. Our association is a 56-year old entity that represents 1,600 members that collectively contribute 30,000 volunteer hours annually to the recovery of wild salmon. We are deeply invested in our region's unique and iconic species of fish and wildlife that the Northwest sportsman has been pursuing for decades. We plan on handing down to our children and to our grandchildren healthy land and water ecosystems that produce abundant fish and wildlife for our families and our citizens. When developing the EIS on BLM's coal leasing program, we ask that you take into account the true cost of coal including the consumption of this fossil fuel on ocean acidification. The shellfish on the Pacific Coast are our "canary in a coal mine," and our Pacific shellfish are on the brink of a major disaster. The Whiskey Creek Shellfish Hatchery on Netarts Bay, our state's cleanest estuary, has recently invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in water quality equipment just to ensure that their oyster juveniles survive. Prior to the water quality equipment, they were losing up to 80 percent of their juvenile oysters that fuel a multi-million dollar industry on the Pacific Coast. That water quality equipment deals with ocean acidification. The Dungeness Crab Fishery on the Pacific Coast is worth million of dollars. The pacific shrimp harvest this year has closed off the Oregon coast. We have serious deterioration of the plankton that feeds our juvenile salmon as well as our forage fish. And probably most alarming is that now we're realizing ocean acidification from the effects of fossil fuel consumption 30 years ago, and we've more than tripled our consumption since then. We also need to take into account the chemical reaction that takes place from the coal dust that's left along our 150-mile drain system along the Columbia River affecting the chemical makeup of the waters that our salmon swim in. And, finally, climate change is real. It is here. It is intensifying every year. We're just coming off a major El Nino warm-water event as well as a warm-water anomaly in the Gulf of Alaska that will have impact on our multi-million dollar salmon fisheries for generations to come.